

SOCIAL ACTION

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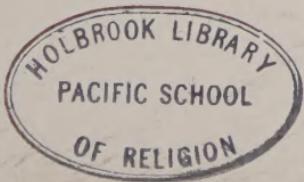
JUNE 15, 1946



In What Direction is America Moving?

*An Analysis of Present Trends in Politics,
Government, Economic and Social Organization*

By EDUARD C. LINDEMAN



SOCIAL ACTION Magazine

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Confusion is Our Problem

Confusion as to what are the underlying movements and forces in our domestic and international life is the mood of the day. We feel we are at important crossroads. But where they lead, we do not know.

One way for any hectic, rumor-ridden person to gain perspective is to talk to someone who seems to have his feet on the ground and his mind in control. So out of mail from readers and from our own thoughts as to the direction of social change in America we made up a list of questions and presented them to a man noted for his penetrating discernment of the patterns and forces in contemporary affairs—Dr. Eduard Lindeman, professor of social philosophy at the New York School for Social Work.

Dr. Lindeman has an international reputation through his numerous books and lectureships as a forthright and liberal thinker. He is a member of the directing boards of many national organizations in research and education, youth welfare, housing and social work, and has served with several important administrative and planning commissions of the federal government (Works Projects Administration, Conference on Children in a Democracy, the President's Interdepartmental Committee for Reorganization of the Federal Government, etc.).

For all of us who want to know what time it is in America, Dr. Lindeman has given his careful and personal answer.

—KENNETH UNDERWOOD

In What Direction is America Moving?

By EDUARD C. LINDEMAN

I have been asked by the editors of *Social Action* to furnish answers to a series of questions all of which derive from the above title. My task is made difficult by the fact that American public opinion is no longer subject to ready appraisal. Citizens no longer form opinions in the usual fashion. They do not ask each other what they think about an issue. Discussion now begins with a question of this type: "Did you read what Walter Lippmann said about Russia this morning?" They then proceed to discuss, not the issue, but the opinions of their favorite press or radio commentator. Thus, their discussions are derivative, secondary. The significant factors which constitute the issue are seldom explored. Discussion begins with previously formed opinions and omits the important elements—the facts from which the issue emerged.

Public Opinion Formed from the Top Down

Public opinion in America has become "jumpy," unsteady, and hence less predictable. Regional distinctions appear to lose their importance, a fact no doubt traceable to the nation's vast machinery of syndicated opinion and to the ubiquitous radio network programs. The local press tells one almost nothing of importance regarding local opinion. Radio round-tables become the vicarious substitutes for genuine discussion. The local forum, where this institution of adult education exists, imports its speakers from the larger urban centers. It matters very little what the speakers say, because they take the first train back to the metropolis from whence they came and bear no responsibility for the consequences of their statements.

Public opinion in America is no longer democratically formed. It does not arise from candid discussions and exchanges of knowledge and experience between responsible citizens. Rather, it seeps down to the citizens in authoritative fashion and the more authoritative it sounds to the listener the more



—International News Photo

"Public opinion is no longer democratically formed."

readily is it believed. If we do not soon discover modern alternatives for the older face-to-face exchanges, the end-result will be a citizenship more and more susceptible to demagogues.

Tentative Judgments of a Fellow-Citizen

I find myself confronted with a perplexing problem at the very outset of this enterprise. The title-question seems to imply that there is an America which is moving in a given direction, but that I, as citizen, am somewhat external to that movement. This assumption runs counter to my conception of democratic responsibility. Responsible participation is the essence of democratic citizenship, and we ought to ask ourselves what part we are playing in determining the direction in which America is moving, with the clear presumption that we are involved in both the movement and its direction. If the reader will strive to keep in mind that it is in this mood that I proceed to answer the editors' queries, he will remind himself now and then that

he is not absorbing the ideas of an authority but rather the tentative judgment of a fellow-citizen.

I. **What do the terms "left" and "right," "liberal" and "reactionary" mean in Europe and in America today? What are the practical alternatives they pose?**

The terms "left," "right," "liberal," "reactionary," *et cetera*, no longer carry adequately clear meanings. These are not functional terms. The first two are ideological in origin and are used to distinguish Marxists from non-Marxists.* The two latter terms are residues from Nineteenth Century political thought. Our age stands in need of a new terminology to express political and economic ideas. Since the new words have not yet been coined, we are obliged to wrestle with these emotionally-laden symbols which belong more to the realm of propaganda than to serious and reasonable discourse. The alternatives implied in the *left-liberal* mentality as distinguished from the *right-reactionary* may be summarized thus:

The left-liberal:

- (a) accepts the inevitability of change
- (b) is interested in the welfare of masses
- (c) believes in a continuous extension of democratic principles
- (d) believes that economic and social planning are necessary for a technological society
- (e) adheres to the thesis that modern governments must guarantee the stability of their respective economies

The right-reactionary:

- (a) regards change as a threat
- (b) is concerned primarily with the elite
- (c) insofar as he believes in democracy at all, insists that its principles be applied only to politics
- (d) conceives of planning as a denial of individual rights and privileges
- (e) believes that economic processes must, as far as possible, be freed from political controls

*I am of course speaking of current usage. Political use of the terms "left" and "right" probably came into our language via the British parliamentary practice of dividing the House on a crucial vote.

(f) believes that modern societies must, if they desire stability, protect their citizens from the major hazards of contemporary life through varieties of insurances and subsidies

(f) insists that a special virtue attaches to individual responsibility, and that every encroachment upon it tends toward moral deterioration

The Confusion of "Left" and "Right"

The above differentiations are, obviously, partial and traceable to the author's personal predilections. I should prefer to call all attitudes in the left-hand column liberal and those on the right conservative. The terms "right" and "left" tend to confuse. In this country, more so than in Europe, everybody labeled as a *left-liberal* is presumed to be either a Communist or a fellow-traveler, and everyone labeled *right-reactionary* is a Communist-hater, a Russophobe, or a red-baiter. It is not feasible at present to winnow out a left-right classification which will hold for both domestic and international issues. In the present paradoxical condition of our war-torn world it is possible for a nation to be liberal with respect to its domestic affairs and reactionary in the international sphere. Both England and Soviet Russia illustrate this point. To be liberal internationally means to carry a strong conviction regarding the indivisibility of our world and the indivisibility of peace. But, it is not enough for a liberal to want peace: he must want it on terms which conserve the integrity of all nations, great and small.

2. On your recent trip to Western Europe could you discern any clear direction toward the left or right in economic and political policy?

On the surface European politics is moving to the right while economic affairs are moving to the left. I assume that recent elections which all seem to reveal a rightist trend have not taken place in a normal atmosphere, and are in a sense non-historical. The basic historical tendency for our time (and it should be mentioned that for the first time in history nearly



—Acme

French Leftists campaign in Paris before their defeat in the recent vote on a new constitution. European politics are moving to the right while economic affairs are moving to the left, but the elections did not take place in a normal atmosphere. The basic historical tendency of our time is definitely leftward, writes Dr. Lindeman.

all nations are affected by the same causal factors) is, I believe, definitely leftward, but the world is too disorganized, too confused to comprehend this basic tendency. Ultimately, political and economic trends will coalesce and precipitate a new climate of opinion in which attention will be focused upon problems to be solved and will no longer emanate from fears.

3. How do European trends toward the left or right affect United States' foreign policy?

European attitudes towards the United States tend to fluctuate between two poles, one of which is fear of our great in-

dustrial and military power and the other a desire to win our support. Most Europeans now feel that the United States is moving towards the right and this country has hence become the object of severe attack from the European left. The European right (conservatives), while applauding our rightist tendencies, is nevertheless filled with misgivings regarding our future role in world affairs. If the rightist trend goes far enough to make of America a gigantic imperialistic unit, they know that they will then inevitably be involved in competition and conflict with us. A consistently liberal trend in America would, I believe, constitute the most important factor in relieving European fears and would thus be conducive to peace.

4. What are the trends in American foreign policy? Are we forming a rightist bloc against Russia?

American foreign policy is an enigma which I am not able to interpret. There are, as a matter of fact, four different kinds of American foreign policy, namely: (a) that originating in the conservative wing of our State Department; (b) that



—Acme

Molotov and Byrnes in a happier mood, before the chasm between the East and the West seemed so hard to bridge.

emanating from the liberal sector of the State Department; (c) that which arises as a consequence of the existing strength of our Army and Navy; and (d) that policy which is reflected in the United States Senate. These are all official sources of policy and represent patent contradictions. Until some degree of confluence is brought about in these four official circles there will be no trustworthy American foreign policy and we shall continue to stumble along in opportunistic style, now moving to the liberal side and then to the conservative.

Beneath these official circles there is another series of contradictory policies which derives from citizens themselves and from their multifarious organizations. Here one finds at least five varieties of policy: (a) those who believe American foreign policy should be a reflection of our cultural and historical allegiance to Great Britain; (b) those who insist that Great Britain is no longer as important as Soviet Russia and that our foreign policy should somehow be a reflection of Soviet aspirations; (c) those who insist upon complete American independence culminating if necessary in isolationism; (d) those who seek to make American foreign policy largely that of checkmating Russian advances into new areas of influence; and (e) those who wish to utilize the United Nations as a vehicle for establishing peace by modifications of the rule of sovereignty, by means of functional international instruments operating on behalf of human needs everywhere, and by ultimate disarmament.

In the past American foreign policy has not been in any truly democratic sense a consequence of American public opinion. Until these two strands of responsibility—the official agencies of government and the free citizens as individuals and as members of associations—become mutually interrelated there can be no consistent American foreign policy which will stand the test of democratic principles.

Dangerous Blunders for American Foreign Policy

Lacking a consistent policy based upon genuine democratic



—International News Photo

"An alliance against Soviet Russia . . . would set the stage for another century of ensuing repressions and hence of continuing revolutions." Above, Cairo crowds demonstrate in support of Syrian nationalists.

conceptions, America is likely to fall into disastrous errors. The first and most serious of these blunders would be to become part of an alliance against Soviet Russia. Such a move, if it were to succeed, would leave the world in almost the same position it found itself after the establishment of the so-called Holy Roman Empire. This degree of reaction would set the stage for another century of ensuing repressions and hence of continuing revolutions. It is not an easy matter to speak clearly about entangled Russo-American relations, but in simplest terms our policy should consist of two intentions: (1) to speak plainly to Russia in all negotiations and not abandon our professed principles of democracy and morality; and (2) to offer every possible assistance to the Soviet Union in repairing the damage of war and of building a society in which the masses may enjoy a good standard of living.

The errors we have already committed in Italy, Germany, Greece, Spain, Jugoslavia, Poland, Bulgaria, *et cetera*, are seri-

ous enough but not irreparable. We have too frequently collaborated with anti-democratic factions and our prestige has suffered decidedly thereby. Many of these mistakes were due to abnormal conditions and some were certainly the result of inexperience and lack of trained personnel. I do not mean to imply that those errors which were committed out of wrong intentions should be readily excused, but I do hold that the damage thus far done might easily be undone by a series of straight-forward democratic pronouncements followed by action.

5. Shifting to the domestic scene, what are the political and economic forces jockeying for power and control in America? What is the relative importance of business, labor, and farmers as systems of organized power?

The struggle for power in the United States is no longer understandable in terms of urban versus rural, South versus North, East versus West, nor even of business versus labor. These traditional antipathies still play a part in our political life, but the basic conflict lies on another level. It is not accidental that Southern Congressmen find themselves aligned with Northern Republicans on all crucial issues in our present Congress. Nor is it surprising that members of President Truman's party can no longer be disciplined by him with respect to an administration measure. This breakdown in party lines began during the Roosevelt regime and becomes steadily more apparent.

Some interpreters have assumed that the fundamental conflict in American life revolves about the shifting power of our three great pressure groups: farmers, businessmen and organized labor. If these three groups were represented in political life by agrarian, industrial and labor parties, each striving to utilize government as an instrument for its interests, a sound case might be made on behalf of the pressure-group theory. I do not question the assumption that these three interest-groups

now play a dominant role in politics; they do and we see the consequences when a division occurs respecting the interests of any one of the Big Three.

The Deeper Conflict in America

But, underneath this occupational classification in which the struggle for power shifts with varying involvements of interest, there lies a deeper conflict which cuts across party lines, regional boundaries and occupational interests. The older Marxist analysis based upon class conflicts is not wholly adequate for descriptive purposes, since one now finds two sections of the labor movement on opposite sides in this conflict. Businessmen and industrialists, no less than farmers, find themselves divided on the basic issue which, I believe, is this: *Shall government be used as an instrument for directing our economy, pro-*



—Acme

Two men—Fred Vinson, as Secretary of the Treasury, and Arthur Besse, President of the National Association of Wool Manufacturers—testify at the OPA hearing in Washington. Vinson was vehemently for OPA as a "bulwark against inflation"; Besse was vehemently against a strong OPA. The issue of the increasing or decreasing use of the federal government for control of social and economic organizations of society has been epitomized in the struggle over the continuance of an effective OPA.

viding for social and health security, equalizing educational and cultural opportunities, and for eliminating discriminations against citizens because of race, color, religion, or national origin?

Those who favor these various extensions of governmental authority are called "collectivists" and those who oppose are usually called "individualists." These are the milder epithets. When debate becomes fervid the former are called "communists" and the latter "tories" or "Bourbons." Although it seems to me erroneous in the light of etymology to use the term "collectivism" in this manner, there is a kernel of truth involved in this usage. Complete assumption of all responsibilities including politics, economics, education, and culture would certainly constitute a form of collectivism, and those who dislike the present trend towards the extension of governmental functions insist that this is precisely where we are headed. They see each extension of governmental authority as an inevitable step towards complete collectivization, a step in the direction of Statism.

Here again, I wish we might rid ourselves of the emotional overtones of these propaganda terms. If, instead of calling the present tendency "collectivism," we might think of the gradual expansion of democratic modes and procedures, the specific changes involved would be much easier to comprehend and accept. And this is what I think the American situation has come to be: a struggle to determine whether democracy can survive unless it extends its values to the whole of life. If this expansion of democratic modes is not possible, then it seems to me clear that the democratic era, the democratic experiment, has come to an end.

If the *right-reactionaries* should win this struggle, they would find themselves confronted with exactly the same human needs as now prevail and they would be obliged to utilize government as the tool for meeting these needs. The chief difference would be that they would then be forced to use government

as the means for subduing opposition, and they would then find themselves operating a non-democratic state. In short, it is my assumption that if the United States moves abruptly to the right, the momentum will carry us much further than we expect and the consequence will be an American form of Fascism.

Those who now wish to use government as an instrument for human welfare are, for the most part, liberals who also believe in liberty. Their aim in moving in the direction of the welfare state is to go so far as to remove most of the basic fears and misgivings which give rise to insecurity and unrest but not so far as to make the state the complete and final residue of power and choice. As this great national issue unfolds we shall soon discover some peculiar alignments. I should not be surprised to find enlightened businessmen and enlightened labor leaders collaborating in the interest of stabilizing our economy, enlightened farm leaders working side by side with trade unionists in striving for an increased income for the mass of consumers. I shall not risk a prophecy concerning the time when this degree of enlightenment will be achieved!

SYMBOL OF A NEW ALIGNMENT AMONG "INDIVIDUALISTS"

CHICAGO, May 22 (U.P.)—Robert R. Wason, president of the National Association of Manufacturers, praised John L. Lewis today as a labor leader, saying he was honest and loyal to America.

Mr. Wason said that he preferred Mr. Lewis' record as a labor leader to that of Philip Murray, president of the Congress of Industrial Organizations.

Asked why he preferred Mr. Lewis to Mr. Murray, Mr. Wason replied:

"When Lewis made a bargain he kept it. He has always worked in the interest of the people he represents. He has improved the miners' conditions, not for political purposes, but for welfare purposes. The loyalties of John L. Lewis are to America, first and foremost."

Asked if he wasn't implying that Mr. Murray did not keep bargains, did not work for the people he represented, and was not loyal to America, Mr. Wason replied:

"I didn't say that."

He said Mr. Lewis was a sounder labor leader and in the end would get more for his miners than Mr. Murray got for his steel workers.

6. What is the significance of the present discussion over new political alignments in America?

The prospects of a third party to be used as the mediating force for resolving the present conflict are not at this moment promising. The mere cost in time, energy, and money necessary for bringing a national political party into being means that this task can only be undertaken by a group which has access to these resources. An effective third party—that is, effective for the 1948 elections—could be erected out of two combinations. First, reactionary Democrats and reactionary Republicans in the North and the South might capture a sufficient number



—Acme

"Old Bob" LaFollette, founder of the Progressive Party, delivers a campaign address. In the 1910's northern grain-growers and dairymen failed to capture the industrial labor vote for a successful national third party movement.

of existing local party machines to create an effective third party. Such a combination would have no difficulty in securing finances since it would have in its hands the weapon of fear of collectivism, and the wealthy would easily be led to buy their security through this new party. They would, of course, be mistaken in this, even as were the industrialists who thought they were purchasing their security by supplying funds to the Nazis.

The second possibility is a combination of progressive trade unions with progressive farm organizations augmented by the liberal professional and middle-class groups which are so important in American life. Votes and funds would come primarily from the trade unions and farmers; the professional members would constitute the opinion-forming sector of this combination. I assume that a party built along these lines would lose about two-thirds of the farm support and approximately

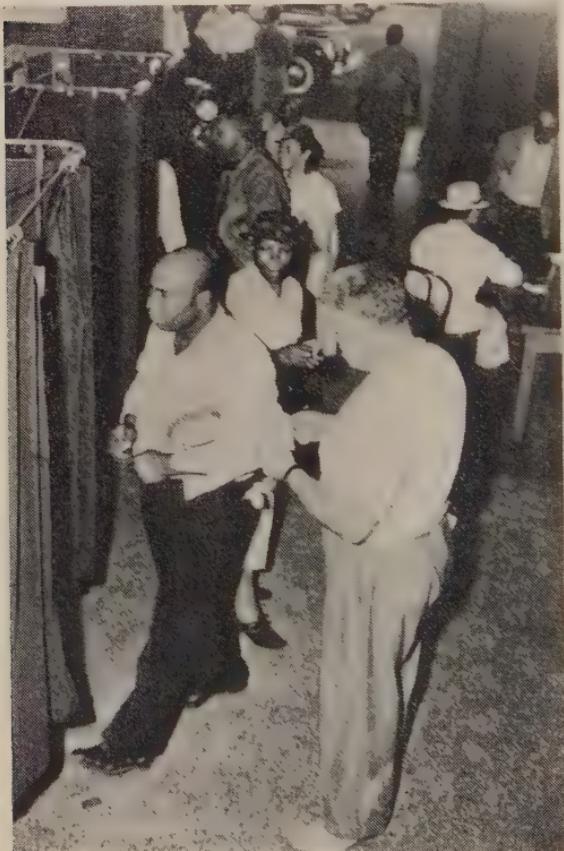


—Acme

Out of the South comes new national liberal leadership that has formulated its principles in hard fought political battles with native demagogues. Above, Governor Ellis Gibbs Arnall of Georgia (left) happily looks out over the inauguration day throng at the state capitol after taking his oath of office in the presence of outgoing Governor Eugene Talmadge.

one-half of labor. The question then is, could such a party win an election? I am at the moment in doubt regarding the wisdom and strategy of forming a new party at this juncture.

I believe that the Democratic Party should be the natural and historical inheritor of the American liberal tradition and I also believe that this will become a real possibility when the Southern states have at last rid themselves of their older political leaders who attained their leadership through non-democratic methods. Indeed, I am of the opinion that some of the finest progressive leadership for the nation will come from the Southern states during the next half-century. These hopes rest, however, upon the assumption that the poll-tax will have been



—International News Photo

Future political alignments in America may depend in great part on whether the poll tax can be licked in the South and the Southern Negro can become an influence at the polls.

completely removed and that effective anti-discrimination statutes will have been enacted.

I am not denying the possibility that our situation may become so grave within the next two years as to make a third party necessary if the progressive citizen is to have any effective outlet for his convictions. Whether or not such a crisis arises depends almost wholly upon the degree and the rapidity of inflation which we are to experience during the next two or three years.

7. What was the political and economic program of the old New Deal and the source of its strength? Is it dead? Is its program a half-way house to a more basic liberal policy and party?

The source of strength of the old New Deal was threefold: First, its leader, Franklin D. Roosevelt, was a gallant figure who possessed the power to inspire confidence, was a crafty politician, and had the unusual gift of knowing how to simplify and vivify national issues. Second, the Harding-Coolidge-Hoover era had provided no normal outlet for the native progressive tendencies of the American people which, having been so long confined, broke forth with impetuosity and warmth, thus creating an enthusiasm which became contagious. Third, the very audacity of the New Deal program enlisted the active support of young, intelligent, and progressive persons in all classes. Recruits of this sort came into government service and there created an atmosphere of promise which also became infectious. Added to these three elements of New Deal strength was the almost poignant faith which the victims of the depression placed in President Roosevelt.

These sources of strength no longer attach to the present administration. The New Deal has lost at least nine-tenths of its most attractive and faithful leadership. Those who now operate the remnants of the New Deal, having sacrificed the enthusiasm of a fighting, crusading movement, come to be more and more office-holders, compromisers, and political



—Acme

Harry S. Truman and Franklin D. Roosevelt during the 1944 campaign. The New Deal appeal is not entirely gone, but the country searches for a new set of symbols.

manipulators. Far superior leadership at present is to be found in those new instruments for political action which keep themselves free from organic party affiliations, but throw their strength on the side of principle regardless of party. At present these citizen action groups have given their support chiefly to Democratic Party candidates, but this may not be true in the 1948 elections.

The program of the New Deal was, as I understood it, based upon the assumptions stated earlier, namely, an effort to meet basic human needs through the instrumentality of government without, however, abandoning the traditional freedoms. As the program evolved, these very needs of the people were translated into conceptions of new freedoms. This program is not dead. It still lives in the hearts and minds of millions of Amer-

icans and will some day be revived and clothed with political power. But it is no longer the popular expression of the "American dream" and does not serve as a rallying cry. In one sense the New Deal was a war casualty and in another sense its decline had already begun before World War II. How this happened is a matter for debate. Some believe that the New Deal declined because it had not gone far enough in the direction of creating a welfare state and others insist that its decline was due to the fact that it had gone too far. I do not see how this debate can be settled through argument. The essential question is: How can a new progressive movement be inaugurated? If the world enjoys a long period of peace, there will be a resurgence of progressivism but the next liberal movement will require new ideas and a fresh set of symbols.

8. What is the political and economic program of the present Republican Party? What are the sources of its support? What chain of events would its policies or the policies of those who control it set off with regard to OPA, full employment, labor-management relations, etc?

The Republican Party cannot, under present circumstances be made into an instrument for achieving progressive ends. That there are among its members fine liberals possessed of an instinctive and valid brand of American progressivism cannot be doubted, but these persons are not capable of capturing the party machinery. If the Republicans succeed in coming elections, they will attempt to enact legislation designed to control trade unions, to repeal all governmental controls over prices, and to withdraw from measures intended to bring about full employment through government initiative. If all of this is done while prosperity prevails, the result will appear to be salutary and the consequence will be to move still further in a conservative direction. The net result of these combined measures will be to increase profits and reduce wages, thus hasten-

ing the next depression. If the Republican Party is in power when the next depression arrives and if this is accompanied by mass unemployment, two consequences may be anticipated: either the nation will move quickly and radically to the left or those in power will attempt to foist upon the nation an authoritative regime. In either case the country will be faced with a revolutionary situation.

These predictions are made in the light of present controls within the Republican Party. It is possible, although not probable, that these controls may be supplanted during the next two years. If, for example, the Democratic Party by reason of its incapacity to deal with management-labor conflicts causes a disaffection of the labor vote, there may come about a transfer of both labor and middle-class voters in sufficient quantity to transform the Republican Party and make of it an instrument of progressivism. As matters now stand there exists a large enough independent vote to bring about a radical shift in either party, and if this vote is not siphoned off into a third party, it will be the determining factor in the next presidential election.

9. What are the central issues facing American democracy today?

I have already indicated the nature of the basic issue in contemporary American life, but it may be useful to elaborate these questions in another form. I shall strive to do so by stating the probable alternatives:

- (a) Either the federal government undertakes to use national power for the purpose of stabilizing our economy, or private economic power will utilize government for its ends.
- (b) Either the federal government will set up central planning bureaus designed to bring production and consumption into equilibrium, or governments will recede from economic responsibilities and thus create a vacuum in

which the fiercest types of competition will prevail, leading ultimately to a collapse of our economy.

(c) Either Congress will again become a truly representative body capable of dealing with the nation's problems in a progressive and statesmanlike manner, or the people will lose faith in the parliamentary process and seek remedies in some variety of authoritarianism.

Each of these dilemmas involves innumerable problems such as taxation, fiscal policies, subsidies, social insurances, expansion of education and social services. But underneath all of these lie two issues which must be

resolved if the nation is to avoid impotence and chaos. These two issues are: (1) How to bring about a working relationship between the three major branches of government—executive, judicial and representative—which will enable the party in power to function effectively and responsively; and (2) how to utilize government as an instrument for the general welfare without abandoning our traditional liberties. Both of these issues require an experimental approach. There is no *a priori* solution which is not laden with qualities which run

PLANNING AND LIBERALISM

It might be instructive for those people who associate all advocates of further government planning and regulation of our economic life with those who are least sensitive to the suppression of ordinary liberties to examine the record of the Supreme Court during the past fifteen years.

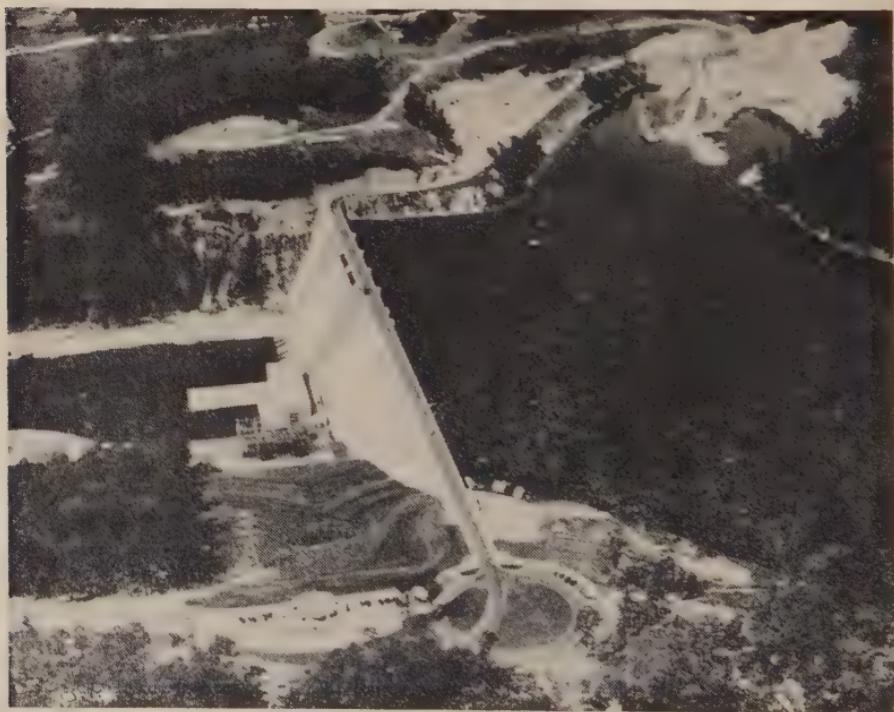
The Court's active invalidation of statutes has been of two kinds: (1) social legislation, and (2) questions of civil liberties. At no period in our history has more legislation on these two subjects come before the Court. Without exception, when the Court has been divided in its decision, the Justices who have been against extended regulation by the government of economic life, have defended legislation suppressing freedom of assembly, speech and press, the freedom of teaching, etc. But those Justices supporting restriction on economic liberties stood firm in invalidating government suppression of individual liberty.

—KENNETH UNDERWOOD

counter to the basic American tradition. Under President Roosevelt the experimental mood led to some noteworthy advances, as for example the Tennessee Valley Authority, and it should be the present obligation of liberals to restore this experimental temper.

10. Are the most dangerous weaknesses of American liberals today confusion of ideology, inability to organize and to control totalitarian tendencies in their own organizations, or what?

American liberalism is not merely confused, as is true throughout the Western World, but is beset by timidities and fears which make its voice sound weak and weary. That variety of liberalism which served as a balance between conservatism



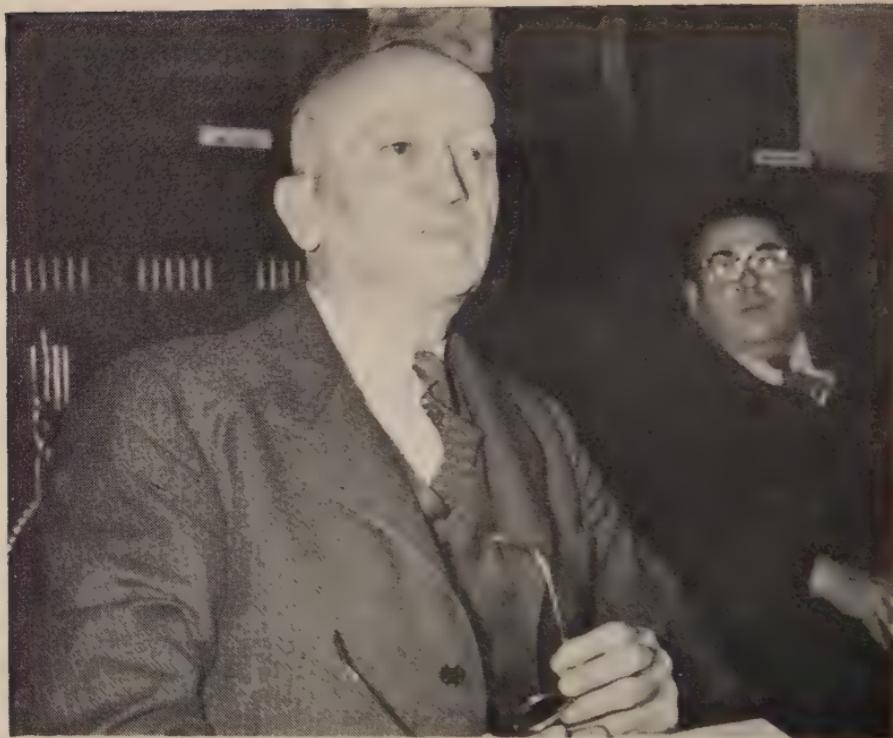
—Acme

America needs a revival of the experimental spirit that gave us the Tennessee Valley Authority with its social planning done democratically.

and radicalism in the Nineteenth Century is no longer suited for our time. The liberal of earlier days was seldom called upon to assume responsibility. His main function was to emphasize humane values in political discussions and in reform movements. At the top of his hierarchy of values stood *freedom*, and not far below one found *reasonableness*. These liberals made a formidable contribution to both British and American life. To a large degree the sanity which in perspective seems to have dominated the latter part of the Nineteenth Century was due largely to the fact that liberals held the balance of power and consistently struggled on behalf of liberty and rationalism in public life. They did not realize that a time would come when there would be a gigantic battle between "those who know and those who no longer believe in knowing."

The liberal of today cannot be effective unless he is prepared to abandon the luxury of tentativeness and base his public conduct upon a clear-cut tendentiousness. He may still claim the right to challenge those who are careless about compatibility between their ends and their means, but he too must choose ends. Unless the liberals of the present perform overtly in the spheres of social action, their influence will wane and disappear.

I wish I knew how to prescribe for those American liberals who are torn between the Scylla of Communism on the one hand and the Charybdis of anti-Communism on the other. The consequences of these two afflictions seem to me to be similar. Those who abominate the Communists and those who appease the Communists seem to me to fall eventually into the same pit. They ultimately find themselves appraising public questions, not in terms of facts and validities, but in the light of whether Communists or anti-Communists will be for or against. I know persons now who would actually prefer to be maneuvered into a wrong position on an issue than to be found favoring one also sponsored by Communists. As hinted above, I see no simple remedy for this ideological "sickness" but I hold the conviction that this troublesome and confusing era of ideolog-



—International News Photo

William Z. Foster, present leader of the Communist Party in the United States, as he testified before the House Un-American Activities Committee.

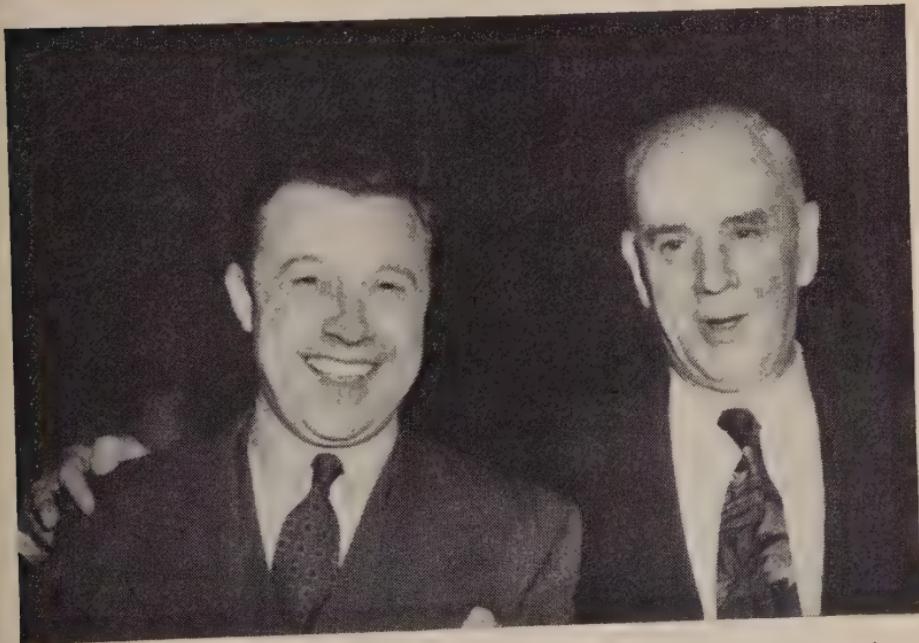
ical compulsions is almost over. I assume that we shall soon find ourselves moving towards a more pragmatic approach to political, social and economic problems, an approach which asks us first to decide what to do next and not what to believe first.

Among the hopeful signs which seem to me to offer promise for a future progressive movement in the United States are these:

1. *Veterans of World War II.* My experience with veterans thus far leads me to believe that they would prefer to travel a liberal pathway. The reactionary acts they were supposed to commit upon their return have not eventuated. They are, for the most part, a sane, healthy-minded

lot; and if the civilians would meet them half-way, they would help us govern this country progressively and in the interests of human needs.

2. *Trade Union Leaders.* In the rapidly-expanding trade union movement of the past ten years there have been recruited some of the finest leaders in American life. They have not yet exercised this leadership in community affairs on a large scale but they soon will, and when they do there will come about an increment in democratic faith. Trade union leaders, especially the younger ones, know that labor organizations can function only in a democratic society, and knowing this will influence them to fight on the side of democracy in other areas.
3. *Youth.* The clearest-minded, least fear-ridden and non-



—Acme

Labor leaders, such as Walter Reuther and Philip Murray, who are becoming increasingly aware of the stake of unions in democracy, will be a continuing force for liberalism.

hypocritical Americans I know are young people. Unhappily, we offer them no responsibilities commensurate with their capacities. If all the youth in America could begin voting at the age of eighteen, we should soon find ourselves equipped with enough youthful and courageous progressivism to make sure that the nation would move consistently in a liberal direction.

II. What should be the role of the Church in the light of the above analysis?

The responsibility of the Church in these times of stress is a theme for an entirely separate discourse. I shall confine myself to a single proposal which will, I trust, lead to continued discussion.

I wish the churches would begin to emphasize their teaching function and to de-emphasize preaching. The world is hungering for moral guidance. Earnest persons who are aware that all our public issues are at bottom moral in character want to know how to deal with these moral elements, but they want advice which is actually usable. The sermonic tendency is to place morals at a point in the equation which the average citizen cannot reach. Ultimately, he assumes that these sermons were never intended to be taken seriously, that is, translated into personal and social action. As one of our American pragmatic philosophers once said: "You can tell people in sermons from now until doomsday that they ought to love one another and it will not do the least amount of good; they'll go on hating each other. What is needed is an experiment in which they can learn through trial and error whether it's possible to love persons with whom you are engaged in useful tasks."

Does this mean to bring politics, economics and social problems into the Church and by the same token to drive religion and ritual out? I do not think so. To me only that religion is true which aids people to face realities, and the highest ritual is the good man doing good.

Reader's Guide to Programs Proposed For American and English Democracy

By FRANCIS W. COKER

I. Very Conservative Books Holding to an Unregulated, Competitive, Free Enterprise System.

American:

John T. Flynn, *As We Go Marching*. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1944.

Friedrich A. Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1944.

British:

Ludwig von Mises, *Bureaucracy*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1944.

II. Middle-of-the-Road Programs, Moderate Compared with Authors in Group I.

American:

Eric Johnston, *America Unlimited*. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1944.

Beardsley Ruml, *Tomorrow's Business*. New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1944.

George Terborgh, *The Bogey of Economic Maturity*. Chicago: Machinery and Allied Products Institute, 1945.

Republican Party Platform. 1944.

III. Recapitulatory Programs Presenting Middle-of-the-Road View of Group II.

American:

Geoffrey Crowther, "Must Capitalism and Communism Clash?" *New York Times Magazine*, August 6, 1944, pp. 5, 36, 37.

Edwin G. Nourse, "Democratic Private Enterprise, an American Objective," in William McKee and Louis J. Wilson, eds., *American Economic Objectives*. New Wilmington, Pa.: Economic and Business Foundation, 1942.

Sumner H. Schlichter, "Summary of American Economic Objectives," *Ibid.*

Dr. Coker is Cowles Professor of Government at Yale University, author and editor of several books on recent political thought.

IV. New Deal Policy.

American:

H. Gordon Hayes, *Spending, Saving, and Employment*. New York: A. A. Knopf, 1945.

Henry Wallace, *Sixty Million Jobs*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1945.

Democratic Party Platform, 1944.

British:

Sir William H. Beveridge, *Full Employment in a Free Society*. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1945.

Barbara Wootton, *Freedom Under Planning*. Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1945.

Liberal Party; England, "20-Point Manifesto . . . General Election, 1945"; in *Liberal Magazine*, July, 1945, pp. 321-7.

V. Recapitulation in the New Deal Tradition.

American:

Stuart Chase, *Democracy Under Pressure*. New York: Twentieth Century Fund, 1942.

Lewis Corey, *The Unfinished Task: Economic Reconstruction for Democracy*. New York: Viking Press, 1942.

Henry Bamford Parkes, *Marxism: An Autopsy*, chs. vi-vii. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin Co.

VI. Liberal Socialist Programs. Most Fruitful Thinking Being Done in England.

American:

Norman Thomas, *What is Our Destiny?* New York: Doubleday Doran & Co., 1944.

Socialist Party of the United States, Platform, 1944.

British:

Harold J. Laski, *Reflections on the Revolution in Our Times*. New York: Viking Press, 1943.

British Labour Party, "Let Us Face the Future": Election Declaration, April, 1945; in Harry W. Laidler, *British Labor's Rise to Power* (1945), pp. 20-30.

Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (Canada), "Federal Election Manifesto," Nov. 29-Dec. 1, 1944; in *Cooperative Commonwealth Federation News*, Jan. 18, 1945 (vol. 9), pp. 3-4.

Proposed and rejected Constitution of France, 1945; Section II: "Social and Economic Rights" (Arts. xxii-xxxix).

BEGINNING NEXT ISSUE

A Department of Discussion

By Readers-Authors-Editors

Every magazine which does not contain a section for reader comment appears to be inferring an aura of infallibility. The editors of *Social Action* have never desired to make such an inference. However, a reader discussion feature has not been possible until now largely for financial reasons. Separate issues of *Social Action* are read by thousands of people who do not take the magazine regularly, but use it as a pamphlet, purchasing the issues that particularly interest them. We have felt that to carry correspondence about past issues which these people had not seen would detract from the magazine's use by them. We now have funds to prepare both a pamphlet and magazine edition in the future. The pamphlet edition will not carry the reader-author-editor discussion section.

VII. Books Out of Line with Socialism, New Dealism, or Middle-of-the-Road Conservatism of Group III, All of Which Assume the Necessity to Do Things in Big Units. These Authors Want to Prevent Bigness in Business, Labor and Government.

American:

Herbert Agar and Allan Tate, eds., *Who Owns America? A New Declaration of Independence*, Chs. 6 and 7. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin Co., 1936.

John Chamberlain, *The American Stakes*. New York: Carrick & Evans, Inc., 1940.

British:

Hilaire Belloc, *The Restoration of Property*. New York: Sheed & Ward, 1936.

Social Scene

Few words are more ambiguous than "liberalism." Early American liberals with Patrick Henry shouted for "liberty or death," with Jefferson wrote the Virginia Statute of Religious Liberty, and with France proclaimed "libertie, egalitie and fraternitie."

The Civil War brought the motif of freedom to social consciousness, when Lowell wrote:

"Men whose boast it is that ye come of fathers brave and free,

If there breathes on earth a slave, Are ye truly free and brave?"

The inheritance from Nineteenth Century British liberalism did not entirely carry over into the business system of the States. The accent on "freedom of enterprise" never meant free trade, often resulted in monopoly combination in restraint of trade, and sometimes meant exploitation of labor. Labor found freedom only in the strength of union.

The present effort to extend liberty to larger circles of society is but fulfillment of the initial genius of the American spirit. The attempt to force liberals into a dilemma of choosing between liberty and social control is false; for social control but implements the economic democracy essential to liberty.

Luther's aphorism is still apt, "A Christian man is a most free lord of all things and subject to none; a Christian man is a most dutiful servant of all things and subject to everyone." This synthesis is the genius of any Christian social order.

Alfred W Swan